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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 USNATO 000547

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DEA PLEASE PASS TO MR. AL SANTOS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2017  
TAGS: SNAR NATO PREL MOPS MARR AF  
SUBJECT: DEA ADMINISTRATOR TANDY PUSHES NATO ON CN  
INTERDICTION SUPPORT

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Administrator Karen Tandy pushed NATO to do more to support Afghan drug interdiction efforts during a powerful presentation to Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer and the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on October 1. She highlighted the intertwined relationship between drug traffickers and the Taliban insurgency, and made a compelling case for embedding small DEA cells in key PRTs, noting that DEA and ISAF worked different lines of operation but with the same goal: security and stability in Afghanistan. Working to sensitize Allies to this new concept, she asked for a closer relationship between DEA and ISAF, which would result in DEA giving vital intelligence to ISAF, and ISAF - within its existing operational plan (OPLAN) - providing billeting, limited force protection, and in extremis support to Afghan-led enforcement operations supported by DEA. In a lunch with visiting Dutch officials from The Hague to discuss embedding a DEA team in the Dutch PRT in Uruzgan, the Dutch were cautious, but interested in continued dialogue after the Dutch Parliament decides on the future laydown of Dutch forces in Uruzgan. END SUMMARY.

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Secretary General: "How can NATO be more effective?"

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¶2. (S) In a bilateral meeting prior to meeting the North Atlantic Council, Administrator Tandy previewed for the SYG the themes she would raise with Allies. She highlighted the added value that small DEA cells focused on interdiction bring to PRTs, noting the success these cells have had in Kunduz with the Germans and Nangarhar with the U.S. Each cell consists of one or two DEA agent-analysts working in

collaboration with specialized Afghan personnel from the DEA-trained National Interdiction Unit (NIU), and with authorization from the Ministry of Interior. She told the SYG that DEA seeks to expand this presence to Helmand and Uruzgan provinces in cooperation with the UK and the Dutch, respectively, and would like to cooperate with additional PRTs throughout the country. Given the nexus between narcotics and the insurgency, these cells help ISAF through the sharing of actionable intelligence - often obtained through DEA's extensive HUMINT and SIGINT networks (run in collaboration with the Afghan government) - and through the expansion of the rule of law into provinces where ISAF is operating. ISAF in turn helps the cells through the provision of billeting and limited force protection. The DEA does not conduct eradication, and was not pushing to reopen ISAF's current, painstakingly negotiated OPLAN. The SYG welcomed the Administrator's brief and offered his support to the idea, while stressing the challenge of obtaining individual Allies' consent.

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NAC: Sensitized, interested, though cautious  
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¶3. (C/REL NATO) In the first-ever appearance of a DEA Administrator before the North Atlantic Council, Tandy sought to sensitize Allies to the merits of embedding DEA cells with ISAF personnel in key PRTs, and the value-added that DEA collaboration brings to a PRT. She stressed that the DEA did not conduct eradication, but rather interdiction of high-value targets, working closely with the specially trained, fully vetted Afghan units of the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) - the NIU, and the Sensitive Investigations Unit (SIU) - in operations authorized under Afghan law and in full cooperation with the government.

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Tandy took the Allies through a slide presentation that showed the intertwined relationship between the Taliban and drug traffickers, to include training manuals and significant weapons caches found during Afghan-led busts of narcotics labs, as well as transcripts from meetings recorded by informants that showed active planning and coordination between drug traffickers and insurgents of operations against international forces. Citing the successes in Kunduz and Nangarhar, she explained that the ability to take out Taliban-supporting drug traffickers is contingent on the ability to conduct safe law enforcement operations, and to do that, ISAF support is needed. ISAF in turn sees benefits from the removal of destabilizing forces from a district. She urged greater ISAF support for interdiction and law enforcement operations against high-value targets, citing three examples among several where local ISAF forces (including Germans and Belgians) agreed to provide either outer-perimeter security or standby in-extremis support. Such operations last on average about one hour, a small investment from ISAF for significant returns in the advancement of rule of law and provincial stability.

¶4. (C/REL NATO) The Administrator gave Allies an overview of how the DEA operates in Afghanistan, including its efforts to build Afghan capacity and judicial infrastructure. She stressed that the DEA in Afghanistan does not engage in eradication, target individual farmers, or make arrests under its own authority, but rather, works with Afghans and regional partners to identify, target, and bring to justice major narco-trafficking organizations. As part of the 1500-strong CNPA, DEA has stood up and fully vetted (including with polygraph) the 160-person NIU, which conducts enforcement operations, and the 60-person SIU, which engages in the lengthy, complex process of building the cases behind enforcement operations, and taking arrests through prosecution. DEA has worked with the Afghans and the international community, she briefed, to set up a legal process for counternarcotics law enforcement. The CNPA only operates with warrants received from the Counter Narcotics

Tribunal in Kabul. This centralization, under the aegis of the Criminal Justice Task Force, has resulted in over 700 operations since 2005, and more than 1000 arrests with a 90 percent conviction rate. The Kabul location has also enabled the NIU to imprison several traffickers from the provinces - whom ISAF PRTs are unable to hold indefinitely and whom corrupt local officials would release from local jails - keeping them imprisoned with significant sentences in Kabul, far from their local power bases.

15. (S) Administrator Tandy closed with a concise list of numerous areas where collaboration with the DEA would bring real added value to the goals of individual PRTs and the overall mission goal of ISAF in Afghanistan. First and foremost, DEA collects and shares actionable intelligence obtained through its sensitive sources in Afghanistan, as well as that obtained during operations. DEA information has averted at least 19 hostile acts against U.S. and ISAF forces, and operations have also uncovered significant weapons caches, and assisted in the development of further actionable intelligence. Afghan-led DEA operations remove corrupt officials who are not necessarily military targets, but whose presence is destabilizing. Eliminating drug networks and high-value targets also denies a source of funding for the insurgency and corruption of government officials. Lastly, she stated that enforcement operations conducted by Afghans extend the rule of law, and as such, enhance the sense of security among local Afghans. She cited a recent meeting with the District Governor of Sangin in Helmand province, who affirmed this assertion strongly.

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16. (C) During the follow-on discussion period with PermReps, Ambassador Nuland relayed that during a recent visit to Nangarhar, U.S. ISAF commanders had expressed great appreciation for the DEA presence, and were maximizing their support to Afghan-led CN operations within the limits of ISAF's OPLAN, sharing intelligence, providing surveillance assets to support operations, planning operations together, and providing appropriate security support to Afghan CN operations. RC-East was leading the way, she stated, and urged others to follow. She told Allies that the U.S. was negotiating with the UK to place DEA embeds in PRT Lashkar Gah (which UK Ambassador Eldon later confirmed and welcomed), and would begin talking with the Netherlands about Uruzgan.

17. (C) In other interventions, Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) General Henault agreed that DEA operations in Afghanistan were supportive of ISAF's goals, but cautioned that any expansion of ISAF's responsibilities would require either a reprioritization of the tasks of existing forces, or additional troops and equipment. No Allies challenged Tandy's brief, and the UK, Canada, and Germany spoke in general support. The UK Ambassador appreciated the highlighting of the link between narco-traffickers and the insurgency. The Canadian stated that ISAF operations and counternarcotics operations cannot be stove-piped, and the German welcomed the Afghan lead in enforcement operations and that the U.S. was not proposing to reopen the OPLAN. Slovakia asked about DEA cooperation with Russia, and Spain about corruption in the Ministry of Interior. The Italian Ambassador asked about the role of Pakistan, and he and his Dutch counterpart both noted more precise information about the exact role of ISAF's relationship with the DEA, particularly in non-permissive environments, would need to be fleshed out.

18. (C) The Administrator underscored that she was not proposing reopening ISAF's OPLAN, but rather reprioritizing targets somewhat. DEA could help ISAF by removing actors that threaten stability in Afghanistan. She cited close cooperation with Russia, including information sharing agreements, and Russia's keen desire to stem the flow of drugs from Afghanistan to Russia. She acknowledged that

corruption in the Afghan MOI posed a challenge, stating she had raised the issue of CNPA pay with the Minister himself last week, but assured Allies that NIU and SIU personnel are fully vetted and re-vetted by the DEA, and DEA agents must entrust their lives to their Afghan counterparts. She stated that Pakistan needed to do more - she had passed that message to her Pakistani counterparts recently - and that the DEA was working with the Pakistani Frontier Corps and Afghan authorities to build capabilities and enhance border cooperation.

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Dutch on DEA PRT Embeds: Let's Keep Talking  
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¶9. (C/REL NETHERLANDS) In a follow-on lunch with Dutch MFA and MOD officials (see para 11 for participants list) from The Hague, the Dutch expressed interest in the idea of hosting DEA embeds at PRT Tarin Kowt in Uruzgan, but cautioned that a number of sensitivities existed on their side. U.S. and Dutch participants agreed that further steps should take place only after the Dutch parliament decides on the future laydown of Dutch forces in Uruzgan. Administrator Tandy summarized her briefing to the NAC, and stressed the DEA's focus on bringing down networks and high-value targets, the "kingpins." She highlighted the benefits that DEA embeds bring to the military elements of a PRT, notably considerable

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HUMINT and SIGINT assets, and praised the success DEA had enjoyed with Germany in RC-North, in Kunduz. Underscoring for the Dutch that DEA did not engage in eradication, she explained the longer-term stability gains ISAF PRTs obtained through DEA cooperation, in exchange for relatively minimal force protection. DEA Assistant Regional Director in Afghanistan Vincent Balbo sketched out for the Dutch how day-to-cooperation would work among DEA embeds and a PRT, describing daily briefs and full coordination with the PRT commander (as well as the Regional Command) prior to any interdiction/enforcement operations, to evaluate both their political and military ramifications. He affirmed that Uruzgan was of critical importance to the interdiction effort, given its poppy cultivation numbers but also increasing role as a transit point.

¶10. (C/REL NETHERLANDS) Dutch MFA Deputy DG for Human Rights and Peacebuilding Koen Davidse acknowledged that the ability to deal with the drugs problem in Afghanistan will be a large factor in ISAF's success or failure, and that the Netherlands has realized the impossibility of doing development and stability work without addressing the narcotics situation. He stated he was "acutely aware" of the high value that cooperation with the DEA could bring, but suggested a careful approach, highlighting the current sensitive political situation in the Netherlands as the Parliament considers the mandate renewal and future laydown of Dutch ISAF forces in Uruzgan. Davidse appreciated the interdiction focus of the DEA as opposed to eradication. He expressed interest in hearing more about the DEA relationship with Germany, and receiving updates as the DEA-UK relationship unfolded in Helmand. He cited command and control relationships and OPLAN considerations as areas that would need to be looked at carefully, and contrasted the relatively stronger government in the north and its role in CN operations with a minuscule Uruzgan police force (only approximately 300 officers, he stated), and very weak governance. The Dutch DCM clarified that next steps in moving forward on the dialogue should occur after the Dutch parliament made its decision. He said the dialogue should occur between DEA and relevant Dutch counterparts in The Hague, and DEA should work closely with the Dutch embassy in Kabul.

¶11. (SBU) Lunch participants:

U.S.  
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Ambassador Nuland  
Administrator Tandy  
DEA Assistant Regional Director Afghanistan Vincent Balbo  
DEA Country Attaché The Netherlands Jeffrey Boobar  
USNATO notetaker

Netherlands

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MFA Deputy Director General Human Rights and Peacebuilding  
Koen Davidse  
MOD Afghanistan Policy Department, Mr. Augustus Venendaal  
Dutch Deputy Permanent Representative toNATO Johan van der  
Werff

Secretary General's private Office

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Director Henne Schuwer (NL)

¶12. (U) Administrator Tandy has cleared this cable.  
NULAND